

# critical digest

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## This Week in NYC

Thornton Wilder and Tennessee Williams made definite plans to have their next productions presented Off Broadway. A triple bill of Wilder one act plays, Infancy, Childhood and Some One from Assisi will open Dec 18 at Circle in the Square, directed by Jose Quintero. The playlets are selected from Wilder's projected 14 one act play cycle with the over-all theme of "our lives and errors," all to be presented at Circle in the next six years. After Night of the Iguana debuts on Broadway next month, Williams also will devote his attention to new plays to be presented Off Broadway.

## Plays

A Far Country closes Nov 25 after 274, tour opens in Los Angeles... Mort Sahl at 9 O'Clock to debut at Golden Jan 9, directed by Albert Marre... We Take the Town musical with Robert Preston to be directed by Alex Segal.

## Players

Ray Bolger to star in All American Feb 21... Eric Portman and Gladys Cooper to co-star in A Passage to India Jan 31... Anthony Franciosa and Geraldine Page to co-star in The Umbrella Feb 5... Travis Hudson and Helen Kardon added to New Faces... Larry Kert joined A Family Affair Feb 3... Bijou Fernandez, 84, actress and talent scout, and James Thurber, 66, died in NYC.

## Tickets

The Caretaker tickets can be reserved via phone Sun- JU 6-7711... League of NY Theatres to handle remission of 5% former NY city tax to union welfare funds... The Sap of Life cut prices 5% to reflect drop of city tax.

## Theatre Book Notes

"Sartre: The Origins of a Style" by Frederic Jameson published by Yale Univ Press. \$5.

## NYC Calendar

The Automobile Graveyard- 41st St (125 W 41)- 11/13. Gian Sciadra presents French play by Arrabal, translated by Richard Howard. Directed by Herbert Machiz with Gabriel Dell, Leila Martin, Estelle Parsons.

Back to Back-Midway (420 W 42)- 11/14. Rose Lynch presents twin bill of John Mortimer's short plays "What Shall We Tell Caroline" and "The Dock Brief". Directed by Steve Chernak with Anthony Deardon, Marge Welch.

Bella-Gramercy Arts or East 11th St- 11/16. Lance Barlie & Ned Hendrickson present musical with book & lyrics by Tom O'Malley, directed by Richard Shank.

The Gay Life- Shubert- 11/18. Kermit Bloomgarden presents musical based on Schnitzler's "The Affairs of Anatol" with book by Fay & Michael Kanin, music by Arthur Schwartz, lyrics by Howard Dietz. Direction and choreography by Herbert Ross with Barbara Cook, Jules Munsin, Jeanne Bal, Walter Chiari.

## Drama Desk

Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre plans will be announced at Nov 13 "Drama Desk" meeting with Robert Whitehead, Elia Kazan, Morris Allen, Jo Mielziner.

## Special Events

The Saga of Louis Corbie musical by Clyde North and Adam Carroll to be presented by Hal Friedman at Lambs Club Nov 15-18... Marc Connolly to conduct "Discoveries in Playwriting" seminar at Institute for Advanced Studies in Theatre Arts, NYC, Nov 15... Four new one act plays will be presented Nov 13 by Theatre 1961 at Cherry Lane for one performance: The Audience by Michael Wilkes, The Blueberry Affair by Gudrun Powers, And He Made a Her by Doric Wilson, Sweet of You to Say So by Page Johnson. Free admission by invitation.

## Off Broadway

Phoenix Theatre has been leased for a year to Michael Ian-nucci and Milton Warner. First presentation in Dec will be This Was Burlesque with Ann Corio, a satire on the subject, to be presented 11 performances per week.

All in Love switched opening from Nov 6 to Nov 11... The Sap of Life and Diff'rent to continue on a week-to-week basis... Bella, originally set to open new East 11th St Theatre plans to open at Gramercy Arts Nov 16, claiming former did not make theatre available for rehearsals.

The Hostage to be revived Dec 12 at One Sheridan Sq, directed by Perry Bruskin... Poppa is Home by Dr. Monroe Schneir, a Middletown, Penn chiropractor, set for Dec 12 at Gate, directed by Amnon Kabatchnik... Equity refused permission to re-open Do You Know the Milky Way? with Broadway cast before six month rule expires. Ivor Balding will revive it later, directed by William Hickey... Margaret Hall replaced Marian Mercer, title player Little Mary Sunshine... Priscilla Morrill and Jenny Egan replaced Jane Hoffman and Sudie Bond, American Dream.

## Broadway Business

Variety reports general drop at all shows inspite of eight sellouts--Kean, Shot in the Dark, Sail Away, Milk & Honey, How to Succeed, Mary Mary, Yves Montand, Carnival... Kean drew day long, block long lines day after opening and reports \$1 million advance sale.

## Theatre Record Notes

From the Second City original cast album made this week by Mercury Records... A Family Affair original cast album to be released by United Artists Records.

## Theatre TV Notes

Saturday's Children to be presented in Feb on CBS-TV by Leland Hayward.

DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

Kean-Broadway-11/2. 3 pro- Times, Mirror, World Telegram & Sun-and 4 con- Herald Tribune, News, Post, Journal American- filed on musical adapted from Sartre's comedy with book by Peter Stone, music and lyrics by Robert Wright and George Forrest, staged and choreographed by Jack Cole, presented by Robert Lantz with Alfred Drake, Joan Meldon, Lee Venora, Christopher Hewitt, Oliver Gray. Affirmative notices were diverse, while negative notices generally were disappointed by unconvincing production. Pro voter Taubman, Times, raved for everything except portrayals by Weldon and Venora in the exciting musical, imaginative, touching and gallant. Coleman, Mirror, cheered for everything in the stunning production, excitingly staged, colorful, flavorful, tuneful and stirring. Nadel, WTS, limited his recommendation to Drake's epic portrayal, resonant theatre, with a serviceable score, but undistinguished. Majority negative okayed Drake's efforts. Kerr, Herald Tribune, noted that in the enormously, ambitious entertainment the only thing which really happens is Drake, though even he is required to descend into contemporary nightclub vocal tricks. Chapman, News, agreed it was ambitious, but not convincing. News man wished Drake was opening in Kiss Me Kate again. Watts, Post, tabbed it heavy going, ponderous, strangely lacking in excitement with the book the weakest aspect. McClain, Journal American, found more pretension than promise, decorative but dreary, with Drake not given some big melodic ballads to challenge his unique gifts.

Time Gentlemen Please-Strollers Theatre Club (154 E 54) 11/8. 3 pro-Times, Herald Tribune, World Telegram & Sun- and 2 con- Post, Journal American- filed on John Krimsky's production of London's Players Theatre Victorian Music Hall revue with English cast members Fred Stone, Joan Stern-dale Bennett, Sheila Bernette. Food and drink is available at restaurant theatre located on site of former El Morocco club, performances are at 9 PM and dinner can be ordered before or after the show. Affirmative reviews were all raves for the nostalgic songs and the excellent British song and dance performers., while negative reviews felt material was too dated and not particularly lively. Rave side led by Esterow, Times, who loved gay and saucy show, melodic, vital, fun songs done by talented, clever cast. Crist, Herald Tribune, enjoyed charming special entertainment that is especially pleasing. Nadel, WTS, put his plaudits in the form of an 1899 dispatch to a London daily, rating the event simply smashing. Dissenter Herridge, Post, okayed talents of English cast but thought they would show to better advantage with more imaginative material, the result as a revue was not as entertaining as Julius Monk's nightclub revues. O'Connor, Journal American, guessed the material may have been a hit in London in 1899, but reminded all concerned that this was 1961, please gentlemen, please!

Sharon's Grave-Maidman (416 W 42)-11/8. 7 con-unanimous-filed on Irish Players presentation of John B. Keane's Irish play, directed by Sonia Moore with Helena Carroll, Dermot McNamara, Mel Arrighi, John Call. Many had kind words for potential talent of Irish pub-keeper turned playwright. Notices split on vetoes, some filing pans against lack of play, others panning players, some mild to both play and players. Taubman, Times, appreciated the new author's vivid Irish sense of gab, but feared play became ludicrous. Kerr, Herald Tribune, blamed unsettled mixture of performances for hiding what may have been an interesting play. Davis, News, panned both play and players with exception of Carroll and Arrighi. Coleman, Mirror, found depressing play quite taxing, this inspite of some good performances and a talented playwright.

Go Fight City Hall-Mayfair (235 W 46)-11/2 6 pro-Times, Herald Tribune, News, Mirror, Post, Journal American- filed on American-Yiddish musical play with book by Harry Kalmanowich, music by Murray Rumshinsky, lyrics by Balie Myself, staged by and starring Menachem Rubin with Mae Schoenfeld, Julius Adler. Pro voters agreed with varying degrees of enthusiasm for Second Av type musical moved uptown, produced by Irving Jacobson and Adler. Esterow, Times, loved the pure Second Av show with a little bit of everything -broad, folksy, thick 'and suds, superb clowning and delightful interludes. Kupferberg, Herald Tribune also raved for musical that is a warm saga of family life. Silver, News, in a milder tone okayed amusing family comedy, half in English, hurt by some Tin Pan Alley music. Strassberg, Mirror, marked uptown show a giant step for Jewish actors, though he felt first act was directed unevenly in the small playhouse. Herridge, Post, also felt some of cast acted too broadly for tiny theatre, but otherwise okayed good old fashioned Yiddish musical.

Mime Theatre of Etienne Decroux-Carnegie Recital Hall 11/7. Nadel, World Telegram & Sun, listed some of the rewards of the evening of mime theatre by French star-teacher presented by Eduard Morot-Sir, cultural counselor of the French Embassy. Briefly Decroux' approach succeeds, but Marceau may have spoiled us. Decroux' art by contrast is explicit, exaggerated and gross. You wait in vain, critic reported, much of the evening for the small gesture, the delicate persuasion of minute facial expression.

Gods of the Lightning-Master Theatre (103rd & River-side Drive) 11/6. Morello, World Telegram & Sun, mildly approved Equity Library Theatre revival of 1928 Maxwell Anderson and G H Hickerson drama on the Sacco-Vanzetti case. Spirit of the rebellion remains, judging by applause production received. Though Davey-Marlin Jones direction seems overdrawn in the first act, pace improves as it goes along. Cast headed by Gil Rogers and Harry White was applauded.



NYC  
FUTURE  
CALENDAR

'Toinette-T Marquee- 11/20... Red Roses for Me-  
G Mews-11/20... The Policeman & Androcles & Lion -  
East 74-11/21... Man for All Seasons- ANTA-11/22... Sun-  
day in New York-Cort- 11/29... The Apple- Living-11/29  
... Daughter of Silence-M. Box 11/30.

Shadows of Heroes-York 12/5... Sing Muse!-Van  
Dam-12/6... The Hostage- 1. Sher Sq-12/12 ... Poppa Is  
Home-Gate 12/12... First Love- Morosco 12/13... For-  
tuna 12/14... Wilder Plays-Circle-12/18... Not While I'm  
Eating- Mad Av 12/19... Take Her, She's Mine- Biltmore-  
12/21... Ross- 12/25... Subways Are For Sleeping- 12/26  
... Madame Aphrodite-Orpheum 12/27... Night of the Iguana-  
Royale- 12/28... Funny Thing Happened on Way to Forum-  
12/28... This Was Burlesque- Phoenix 12/?

World Next Door- 1/3... Something About A Sold-  
ier- 1/4... Mort Sahl at 9 O'Clock-Golden -1/6... Romu-  
lus- 1/9... Giants Son of Giants- 1/11 ... Absence of A  
Cello- 1/18... Captains & Kings- 1/22... Passage to India-  
1/31



GREEN  
ROOM  
DEPARTMENT

**RENEW "SAP"...** Recommendation for The Sap of Life, from Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt, Post, week-end musical was to close brought an increase in business and a reprieve of the closing notice. Mrs FDR stated that the show explains that there are certain values and virtues in the US tradition which are worthy of theatrical presentation--family, tradition, need to question, right to fall, ability to see good and evil and live with both. Readers were urged to see musical for the theatre is one of the avenues we have for education as well as for entertainment.

**REVIEWERS AT WORK...** If a play's meaning is so skilfully obscured that it gets by him, McClain, Journal American feels he would be doing his readers a disservice to recommend it, he answered Hal Holbrook's chiding of reviewers for not understanding Do You Know The Milky Way?... Most hectic activity Off Broadway is the juggling of opening dates to trap the big- shot critics on their free nights, comments Davis, News... Two drama critics have sharpened their stilettos for each other, notes Winchell in a "blind" item.

**AMATEUR ACTING...** That peculiar form of group therapy known as amateur acting is in full bloom again over US, details Fitzgerald, Herald Tribune. Some call it groupneurosis. Showing off, an immediate "psychic income", an emotional bang are some of the reasons given why 500,000 clinically sane housewives and businessmen are busy working like dogs in order to give what the charitably inclined will call performances.

**CRITICAL THOUGHTS...** The success of How to Succeed, whose tickets for the next few months are mostly in the hands of benefit party chairmen, may be the boomerang that turns the hit into a financial flop because everyone was too hungry, hopes Chapman, News... Watts, Post, couldn't blame the six excellent young players in Look! We've Come Through if they rushed off to Hollywood, but he hopes they won't... Though news of Ford Fund grants to administrative talent is welcome, Davis, News, would be happy if the foundation could build some theatres to employ managers, actors, etc.

**EVERYBODY'S A CRITIC...** The 146 teen-age students from Sayreville, NJ, High School who were forced to leave the \$1.75 second balcony seats at the opening of Sunday in New York in Washington, D. C. because their teacher feared the play was turning objectionable, were invited to the NY production by producer David Merrick... Journal American editorial hailed teacher's action. A few more incidents like this might convince theatrical producers that overemphasis on sex isn't the drawing card so many think it is... But Merrick & Co insist Norman Krasna comedy is "very clean." Producer added that if that old biddie is an example of teachers of America, he fears for our children.

**THURBER OBIT...** Times and Herald Tribune editorials considered James Thurber's talents as author, but did not consider his theatrical works... Erudite, courageous and frank, Thurber was a prickly, but delightful companion, and he had greatness as a man and a writer, remembers Watts, Post.



PROS & CONS BY TMK

Kean is a huge, top-heavy musical that gets very lost in the onstage mass of gimmicks designed to enliven the basically dull proceedings. Mob scenes, duel scenes, acrobats, a cannon shot and two, count them two, bathtubs, give the script little room or time to explain the complicated title character. Though the audience is easily and early convinced that the famed 19th century actor, lover was a pretentious bore, there is a hint now and then in the book, adapted from a Sartre play, that he was worth a serious dramatic look. Beautiful costumes, sets and leading ladies are wasted in the unfunny, unbelievable spectacle. Though Alfred Drake was in fine voice there is no reason to expect him to replace John Gielgud in the next Shakespeare revival.

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The Complaisant Lover is a superbly acted British parlor discussion of the literate, economic and realistic attributes of adultery, English style. The trio of British cast members are so well disciplined in this type of comedy, and speak the English language so beautifully, that they cover up the slightly obvious fact that Graham Greene has not written much of a sociological drama and/or a quiet sex farce. The present script tries unsuccessfully to combine these two forms, probably an unwise idea to begin with. But the outstanding cast, with the single exception of a rather dull American-born ingenue, is so charming that they manage to make the evening a theatrical delight. The advice here is to see the present English cast, American replacements later on are not going to be half as much fun.

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Off Broadway has a chance to establish itself as a serious part of the American theatre. If it fails to take advantage of the confidence inherent in the first presentations of forthcoming new Wilder and Williams scripts, it deserves to be swept away with the next garbage collection. Inspite of the exploding rate of Off Broadway productions, the serious producers of worthwhile material can be counted on one hand. If others succeed, it is truly beginner's luck, never to be repeated or even attempted again. Too often Off Broadway is a bad solution to combined case of a "vanity" production and an income tax dodge. Amateur authors and actors insist on getting "reviews", when everyone concerned usually knows the production at hand will be deservedly panned. But if more top playwrights make their best work available to the small playhouses, it will be a greedy producer indeed who would rather present a grade F script by a wealthy friend instead of the new Arthur Miller play.

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British playwrights, established and neophytes, have an easier time on Broadway than American authors. Pre-tested London dramas and comedies (but not musicals) can find US producers and investors, though for the new US playwright it has not been a lend-lease affair. Shakespeare never realized how lucky he was that he wasn't born in Brooklyn!

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Save the Ziegfeld Theatre rallys should be organized now NBC lease on Billy Rose's theatre expires next Oct., BUT in recent interviews Rose has not been too enthusiastic about spending time and money to keep the house legit.

OUTER  
BROADWAY  
THEATRE  
LETTER

College Theatre

Brandeis Univ, Waltham, Mass, started construction of \$3 million Nate B & Frances Spingold Theatre Arts Center, donated by late vice president of Columbia Pictures. Two theatres, a multiple stage playhouse seating 500 and an experimental theatre seating 100, will be featured in circular building, new home of graduate and undergraduate theatre arts department. ... Bowling Green, Ohio, State Univ, formally dedicated 287 seat Joe E. Brown Theatre. Star participated as guest artist in Harvey in 1959.

Harpur College, Binghamton, NY, to present Leonce and Lena, Eric Bentley's adaptation of the Buchner fantasy with an original score by Frank Lewin, Princeton, NJ Nov 10, directed by Robert Wren. Arrabal's Picnic on the Battlefield will be the curtain raiser... Yale School of Drama opened season with The Time of Your Life... Poet's Theatre, Cambridge, Mass opens 12th season in new 60 seat workshop theatre.

CarnegieTech, Pittsburgh, Rockefeller Foundation grant of \$30,000 to study the economics of theatre to be researched by Thomas Gale Moore, recently appointed to Graduate School of Industrial Administration, Carn. Tech... Univ of Wisconsin, Madison, theatre library has received manuscripts of plays by Moss Hart, Harold Arlen, Harold Rome.

AETA

NY District of American Educational Theatre Assn third annual one day convention was held Nov 11 at Queens College, Flushing. Speakers included--Bernard Beckermann, Hofstra College; Nikos Psacharopoulos, Yale Univ; John Hemmerle, Scarsdale, High School; and Howard Brandston, Century Lighting Co.

Community Theatre

McCarter Theatre Guild, Princeton, NJ, to sponsor conference Nov 18 at Princeton, Univ to extend techniques of theatre in NJ communities. \$5 registration fee covers the seminars, tea, tour of theatre, and admission to Our Town. Speakers include: Prof Alan Downer, Princeton Univ, and McCarter Theatre staff members.



Arts Councils

Phoenix Theatre, NYC, first tour under NY State Council on the Arts sponsorship covered 25 cities in five weeks with Androcles and the Lion and Hamlet. As Council covered losses up to \$85,000, the box-office prices were held to \$2.50 top with student tickets at 75c & 35c. Project is aimed at introducing new cultural resources into smaller cities of the state.

Winter Repertory

First performance of week's run of readings by Judith Anderson at Geary, San Francisco, was a benefit for Actors Workshop... Theatre-INN-the Round to present Non-Equity winter season at Vernon Stiles Inn, Thompson, Conn, produced by Paul Porter.

Medium Rare, Chicago cabaret revue in 70th week, recommended by Nadel, World Telegram & Sun for its clever material by nine young, talented cast members, low prices and availability of food and drink.

Drama Desk

William E J Martin, Buffalo, NY, Courier-Express, retired after 50 years on the daily.

Summer Playhouses

Newport, RI, Casino Theatre, up for sale... Boston Arts Center Theatre public hearing Nov 13 to determine if city backed summer tent will re-open for a fourth season.

Road Shows

Mary McCarty replaced Mitzi Green in Gypsy second company in Philadelphia... Two national companies of Greenwich Village, USA revue being prepared.

Sick List: Bette Davis missed two Sat performances in Night of the Iguana after backstage fall in Rochester, NY. Patricia Roe subbed... Charles Ruggles missed opening week of The Captains and Kings in San Francisco, due to illness. Howard Wierum subbed at last minute, reading role from book opening night.

Paris

Judith will be presented at Odeon-Theatre de France directed by Jean Louis Barrault.

US Repertory

President Kennedy paid tribute to Theatre Guild-American Repertory Company nine month tour of Europe and Latin America upon return of troupe via telegram to Lawrence Langer. The Miracle Worker was popular favorite, The Glass Menagerie the critical favorite.

London

Becket production in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre repertory at Aldwych will move to the Globe Dec 12 with Christopher Plummer, Eric Porter, directed by Peter Hall... Polish State Jewish Theatre opened season at Princes with The Trees Die Standing by Aleksander Czajkowski... Tyrone Guthrie's productions of HMS Pinafore and The Pirates of Penzance will tour for three weeks prior to Feb London repertory season.

Germany

The Wall produced in Munich by Kurt Meisel opened to both audience and critical approval... The Birthday Party by Harold Pinter presented at West Berlin Tribune, seating 100... The Chalk Garden is current Berliner Theatre new production, and Widower's Houses has opened at Schiller Theatre, Berlin.

Belgium

Romanoff and Juliet to be staged by author Peter Ustinov in Flemish in Antwerp.

Current Road Tours

Captains and Kings-Curran  
San Francisco 11/1

Daughter of Silence-Erlanger  
Philadelphia 10/30

First Love-Colonial, Boston  
11/13

Man for All Seasons- Walnut,  
Philadelphia 11/6

Night of the Iguana-Shubert  
Detroit- 11/7

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"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week. "CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.



